

Send your letters to Letters Editor, New Straits Times, 31, Jalan Riong, 59100 Kuala Lumpur or email letters@nst.com.my (Tel: 03-20569411). A letter must have a writer's name, signature, home address, phone and MyKad numbers. It should ideally not be more than 500 words. The editor reserves the right to edit a letter for clarity and length.

LETTERS

RESEARCH AREA

BUKIT WAWASAN IS OFF-LIMITS

THE Ayer Hitam forest reserve, also known as Bukit Wawasan, in Puchong, Selangor, is popular among hikers and those seeking recreational activity.

Unfortunately, many are not aware that Ayer Hitam is not a recreational forest. It is owned by Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) for research purposes.

It is therefore an offence to encroach on this forest reserve without permission and one can be prosecuted and fined for the offence.

Although this has been highlighted in the media, there are people who are not aware of this.

Two years ago, students were detained by rangers from the Selangor Forestry Department for encroaching on the restricted area at the forest reserve.

They were seen trespassing on the waterfall area during an operation conducted by UPM, the Forestry Department and police.

Recently, there have been sightings of hikers at the forest, although no reports have been lodged with the police or related authorities.



There are no signs to indicate that the Bukit Wawasan forest reserve belongs to UPM and is used for research. PIC COURTESY OF LETTER WRITER

It must be emphasised that the forest reserve is UPM's property and gazetted for its staff to conduct research.

To be fair to the public, there are no signs at the entrance of this forest reserve to indicate that it is private property.

People can't be faulted because they are not aware.

The university should place signs to say that it is not a recreational forest, but that it is a research forest for the university.

Warn the public that it is an offence to be caught in the forest. Have regular patrols to prevent the public from entering the forest.

Students from nearby schools can be roped in as volunteer junior rangers to create awareness and educate hikers and visitors on weekends.

The students can wear special vests so people are aware that they are helping the rangers to create awareness.

Set up an information kiosk at

the entrance of the forest reserve. Organise talks at schools on the management of forest reserves, their use and restrictions, and encourage students to share this information with others.

T.S.

Batu Caves, Selangor